

A STUDY OF COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES USED BY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT STUDENT

¹Wahyu Wigati, ²Lilia Indriani

Tidar University

Email: ¹weweous@gmail.com, ²indriani@untidar.ac.id

Abstract

Communication is one of the skills that English learners must master. However, they sometimes find difficulty when communicating in English. Thus, they need to know the strategies to achieve optimal communication. According to Dörnyei (1995) a communication strategy is a strategy used by students who learn other languages to reduce their inability in language parts such as grammar and vocabulary. This study explores the communication strategies used by the English Department Student. It aims at determining the type and dominance of communication strategies used by the English Department Student. The object of this research is the fifth semester students of the English Department, Tidar University. It uses descriptive qualitative and quantitative approaches. The researchers use the questionnaire method to collect the data. The study finds ten communication strategies used by English department students when they communicate in the English language. Those are message abandonment, topic avoidance, literal translation, borrowing or code-switching, approximation or generalization, word coinage, circumlocution, use of all-purpose words, self-repair or reconstructing, appeals for assistance. The researchers also find that the dominant type of communication strategy used is the appeal for assistance. This study suggests that students and teachers have to be aware of communication strategies. It can be a technical guideline for both students and teachers in anticipating communication learning because it is a helpful strategy for learning development.

Keywords: *Communication, Communication strategies, English.*

Abstrak

Komunikasi merupakan salah satu keterampilan yang harus dikuasai oleh pembelajar bahasa Inggris. Namun, terkadang mereka mengalami kesulitan saat berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris. Dengan demikian, mereka perlu mengetahui strategi untuk mencapai komunikasi yang optimal. Menurut Dörnyei (1995), strategi komunikasi adalah strategi yang digunakan oleh siswa yang belajar bahasa lain untuk mengurangi ketidakmampuannya pada bagian bahasa seperti tata bahasa dan kosakata. Studi ini akan mengeksplorasi strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh Mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui jenis dan dominasi strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh Mahasiswa Jurusan Bahasa Inggris. Objek penelitian ini adalah mahasiswa semester lima Jurusan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Tidar. Penelitian ini

menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dan kuantitatif. Peneliti menggunakan metode kuesioner untuk mengumpulkan data. Studi ini menemukan bahwa ada sepuluh strategi komunikasi yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa jurusan bahasa Inggris ketika mereka berkomunikasi dalam bahasa Inggris. Itu adalah pengabaian pesan, penghindaran topik, terjemahan literal, peminjaman atau pengalihan kode, perkiraan atau generalisasi, penggunaan kata koin, pengabaian kata, penggunaan kata-kata serba guna, perbaikan atau rekonstruksi diri, permohonan bantuan. Peneliti juga menemukan bahwa jenis strategi komunikasi yang dominan digunakan adalah permohonan bantuan. Studi ini menyarankan bahwa siswa dan guru harus menyadari strategi komunikasi. Ini dapat menjadi pedoman teknis bagi siswa dan guru dalam mengantisipasi pembelajaran komunikasi karena merupakan strategi yang membantu untuk pengembangan pembelajaran.

Kata Kunci: *Komunikasi, Strategi komunikasi, Bahasa Inggris*

INTRODUCTION

English is a language that is considered essential and needs to be studied at this time. Reddy (2016) says that English is a language that is used chiefly as an international language. Nishanthi (2018) adds that English is the dominant language used by the world. It has a significant role in the world, especially in every field of work. English can help us connect with other people without being hindered by language Herman, Sibarani & Pardede, (2020) It also can open up opportunities for us to enter the global world, where there will be more insights. People will benefit a lot when learning English. Therefore, countries in the world consider

English a significant language in their countries. They encourage their people, mostly students, to learn English.

In learning English, mastering English is the primary goal of students. Rao (2019) states that the ultimate goal of learning a language is communicating in that language. Ahmad (2016) argues that students are more trained to acquire communication skills because English is used globally (Sinaga, H. & Pasaribu (2020). According to Lunenburg (2010) communication is transmitting information and knowledge from one person to another. It is also a medium for processing and obtaining information.

Therefore, we transfer our messages to others. Therefore, English learners need to learn how to communicate in that language.

However, students sometimes fail to express themselves and be clear when speaking. Heriansyah (2013) points out that most students studying foreign languages will have difficulty speaking because it requires semantic knowledge and grammar rules. Susilawati et al., (2017) show that psychological factors also cause students to have difficulty communicating. They have little self-confidence and are afraid of making mistakes. However, in learning, students are required to communicate, at least when in class. Thus, students should at least be able to deal with their shortcomings.

Ahmed & Pawar (2018) say that foreign language learners usually experience challenges in communicating. As a result, they use other alternatives in conveying messages. Thus, in order to be able to communicate in English, students need to know how the strategies are used to achieve optimal

communication. Dörnyei (1995) describes that communication strategy is a strategy used by students who learn other languages to reduce their language parts such as grammar and vocabulary. Students use this communication strategy to deal with communication problems that occur when learning to communicate using English. Færch & Kasper (1983) define that communication strategies are strategic to reduce phonological, syntactical, lexical, and morphological levels. It is used to reduce someone's trouble when they have less understanding of linguistics. Jeharsae (2014) reports that communication strategy is a technique to overcome difficulties, especially learning English as a foreign language. It helps students improve and ensure effective communication with others.

Karpati (2017) states that communication strategies are crucial for students who learn foreign languages when communicating. Students who study English as a foreign language have limited English linguistic abilities because it is not their native language. Putri (2013)

argues that communication strategies are techniques used by someone who is not a native speaker to avoid problems during a conversation. Jamshidnejad (2011) adds that communication strategies help develop the meaning accuracy of the sentences they say when communicating with the target language. Students will be more able to control how they face a problem that occurs because of their disability. Communication will feel more controllable, and there will be less fear of mistakes. Therefore, the communication strategy is crucial for students studying English because they will face challenges and difficulties. Therefore, it needs to be considered in learning. Krishnan et al., (2018) show that students' lack of communication strategies could cause learning English deficiencies. It indicates how important it is for students to use communication strategies to overcome difficulties and improve their abilities.

According to Hua, T. K., Nor & Jaradat (2012), Bialystok (1990) defines communication strategies into

several types. These types are an adaptation of (Tarone, 1977; Færch & Kasper, 1983).

A. Avoidance Strategies or Reduction Strategies

These strategies help us to avoid some problems when we communicate.

1. Message Abandonment

The learners remain the message or utterance uncompleted. They say something not entirely because of the difficulties.

2. Topic Avoidance

The learners avoid a topic that will show a lacking of language skills. Instead, the learners leave the topic or pretend not to remember topics they cannot express through a target language.

B. The achievement or compensatory strategies

1. Literal translation

The learners translate the first language linguistic items into the target language.

2. Borrowing or Code-switching
The learners use a first language word with first language pronunciation while speaking in the second language.
3. Foreignizing
The learners use the word of the first language by adjusting to second language phonology or morphology.
4. Approximation or Generalization
The learners use an alternative term of the target language to deliver the closest meaning.
5. Word coinage
The learners create non-existing target language words to build upon particular rules.
6. Circumlocution
The learners describe the action of the object of the second language.
7. Use of all-purpose words
The learners use general language items to fill the lacking of a specific word.
8. Self-repair or restructuring
The learners make a replacement plan when they are failed to speak in the first attempt.
9. Appeals for assistance
The learners ask other interlocutors to help them.
10. Stealing or Time-gaining strategies
The learners use a linguistic device that can interlude for additional time to think, such as fillers.

However, Sutthinaraphan & Wasanasomsithi (2017) mention that many students show a difference in using these communication strategies. Thus, it makes an exciting thing to explore. The researcher finds several previous research on the type used by English learners. First, Nasrullah (2017) conducted previous research that most English department students' use was appeals to help them in communication. Students use it because they do not know the right words in English to express their message. Second, Puspitasari &

Fauziati (2017) found that students use most of their time gaining strategy in communication. It is followed by code-switching, appeal for help, message abandonment, literal translation, and non-linguistic signals.

Based on previous research results, the researcher is interested in examining English learners' communication strategies, especially English department students who study more in English. In addition, the researcher wants to know the strategies they are using. Therefore, this study aims to determine the type and the dominance of communication strategies used by the English Department Student.

METHOD

This study used a descriptive qualitative, and quantitative approach. According to Schoonenboom & Johnson (2017) qualitative and quantitative methods were the mixed method that a researcher integrates components of those two to amplify the study conclusions.

The researcher explored the communication strategies that English

learners used. This analysis's subject was 30 students from semester 5 of the English Department, Faculty of Education and Teachers Training, Tidar University, Magelang. Indonesian was their native language, and they were studying the English language as a foreign language.

The researcher used the questionnaire method for collecting the data. According to Roopa & Rani (2012), the questionnaire comprised questions that the research subjects inform their opinion. Thus, it provided consistent and coherent data for research. The questionnaire used in this study was based on the previous analysis conducted by (Hua, T. K., Nor & Jaradat, 2012) The questions were the type of communication strategy, which were divided into ten parts. It was based on communication strategy classification from Tarone, (1977); Færch & Kasper (1983). The sections were self-repair, topic avoidance, code-switching, message abandonment, literal translation, appeal for assistance, approximation, circumlocution, use of all-purpose words, and word coinage.

Students gave their opinions about what types of communication strategies were used in communication. Then, they were asked to provide data by choosing based on the level of use. There were five levels of use, namely (a) always, (b) often, (c) sometimes, (d) seldom, and (e) never. The option used a Likert five-point scale to analyze that 5 points for always, 4 points for often, 3 points for sometimes, 2 points for seldom, and 1 point for never. Therefore, the higher score indicated a higher frequency of the communication strategy used by the

students. After the data is collected, the researcher collected the data of the questionnaire and analyzed it. Then, the result would be a criterion in concluding the research.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

After collecting the data, the researcher produces it into a table to be analysed. There are ten types of communication strategies used by the students. Based on the questionnaire, they use all of the ten types. It can be seen in table 1.

Table 1. Communication Strategies Used by All Students

No.	Types of communication strategy	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Message Abandonment	10	3.13	2.66
2	Topic Avoidance	10	3	2.63
3	Literal Translation	10	3	2.64
4	Code-Switching	10	3.1	2.72
5	Generalization	10	2.7	2.38
6	Word Coinage	10	2.37	1.98
7	Circumlocution	10	3.2	2.74
8	All-Purpose Words	10	3.03	2.68
9	Self-Repair	10	3.43	3.04
10	Appeals for Assistance	10	3.57	3.16

Table 1 reveals the mean and standard deviation of the communication strategies collected from the questionnaire. In addition, it

presents how much frequently do students using communication strategies. Based on the popularity, those are appeals for assistance, self-

repair, circumlocution, code-switching, message abandonment, all-purpose words, topic avoidance, literal translation, generalization, and word coinage.

The researcher found that the lowest mean is 2.37, and the highest is 3.57. The Likert scale indicates that students use those ten types of communication strategies with the frequency of use rarely and sometimes. The Likert scale divides into five points 1 for the answer never, 2 for rarely, 3 for sometimes, 4 for often, and 5 for always.

However, table 1 also illustrates that most of the types have a mean of 3. Thus, there are eight of ten types. It implies that the students use topic avoidance, literal translation, all-purpose words, message abandonment, code-switching, circumlocution, and self-repair in the frequency of sometimes. Meanwhile, two types have 2 mean scores. The mean 2.37 and 2.7 means that they rarely used communication strategies for generalization and word coinage.

Furthermore, the highest mean belongs to appeals for assistance,

which has a 3.57 mean score. It signifies that appeal for assistance is the most used strategy type for communicating. Thus, students tend to ask someone when they have difficulties. They need help from others to fill their gaps when communicating in English. In comparison, the lowest mean, 2.37, belongs to word coinage. It means that students do not likely prefer word coinage. They prefer another strategy rather than making up an English new word to help them when they have trouble picking the right words to express it.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results above, the researcher concludes that there are ten communication strategies used by English department students when they communicate in the English language. Those are message abandonment, topic avoidance, literal translation, borrowing or code-switching, approximation or generalization, word coinage, circumlocution, use of all-purpose words, self-repair or reconstructing,

appeals for assistance. The students use these strategies in level frequency rarely and sometimes. The researcher also found that the dominant type of communication strategy used is the appeal for assistance. They prefer to ask others to help with their problem when communicating in English.

The researcher suggests that students and teachers have to be aware of communication strategies. It can be a technical guideline for both students and teachers in anticipating communication learning because this strategy is a valuable strategy for learning development. The results of this study also show that almost every student uses a strategy in communication. It indicates that in learning English, they need a strategy, especially in communication. Thus, in learning, it is essential to add learning and training this strategy.

For future research, this study relies on students' opinions to find the frequency of their communication strategies. The writer suggests that in determining the strategies they do in real life, further study is needed. Therefore, the knowledge of the

strategies used by them will be more specific.

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